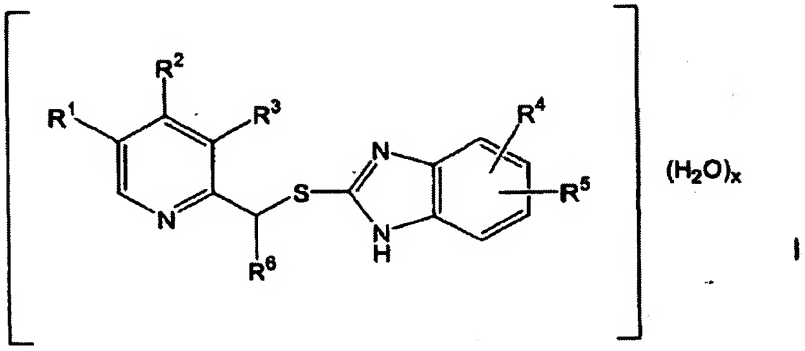
II. CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A crystal ~~Crystals~~ of optionally substituted 2-(2-pyridinyl) methylthio-1H-benzimidazole hydrate ~~hydrates~~ of the following structural formula I



I

in which R', R^2 and R^3, identical or different, denote hydrogen, a C1-C8 alkyl, C3-C8 cycloalkyl, C2-C8 fluoroalkyl or C1-C8 alkoxy moiety ~~residue~~,

R^4 and R^5, identical or different, denote hydrogen, a C1-C8 alkyl, C3-C8 cycloalkyl, CH_2-C3-C8 cycloalkyl, C1-C8 alkoxycarbonyl, C1-C8 alkoxy, C1-C8 fluoroalkoxy, CF_3-, C2-C8 fluoroalkyl or C(O)O-C1-C8 alkyl moiety ~~residue~~ and

R^6 denotes

hydrogen or a C1-C2 alkyl moiety ~~residue~~ and

x means 0.5-2.

2. (Currently Amended) A crystal ~~Crystals~~ according to claim 1, in which R^1, R^2 and R^3, identical or different, denote hydrogen, a C1-C3 alkyl or C1-C3 alkoxy moiety ~~residue~~, R^4 and R^5, identical or different, denote hydrogen, a C1-C3 alkoxy, C1-C3 fluoroalkoxy moiety ~~residue~~ and R^6 denotes hydrogen and x means 0.5-2.

3. (Currently Amended) A crystal ~~Crystals~~ according to claim 1, in which R^1 denotes a methyl group, R^2 a methoxy group, R^3 a methyl group, R^4 hydrogen, R^5 a methoxy group in position 5 and R^6 hydrogen and x means 0.5-2.

4. (Currently Amended) A crystal ~~Crystals~~ according to claim 1,in which R^1 denotes hydrogen, R^2 and R^3 in each case denote a methoxy group, R^4 denotes hydrogen, R^5 a difluoromethoxy group in position 5 and R^6 hydrogen and x means 0.5-2.

5. (Withdrawn) A process for the isolation of a compound according to one of claims 1 from a reaction medium containing the free base, characterised in that a water-soluble, organic solvent present in the reaction medium is at most partially removed, water is added to the reaction medium at a temperature of below 40°C water in quantities of at least 55 wt.%, relative

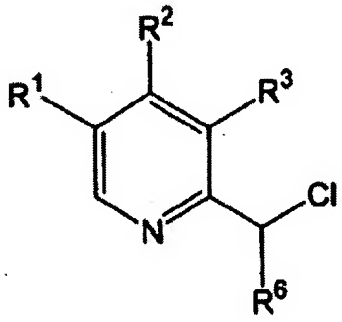
to the reaction medium, and the hydrates formed are separated as crystals and optionally purified in conventional manner.

6. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that water is added in quantities of at least 70 wt.% relative to the reaction medium.

7. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that water is added in quantities of up to 75 wt.% relative to the reaction medium.

8. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that the water is added at a temperature of 20-25°C.

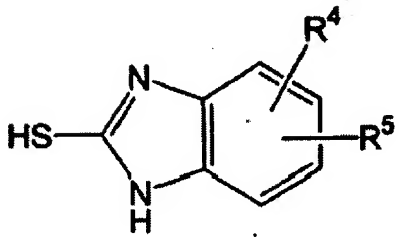
9. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that an unhydrated compound of the formula I was obtained in the reaction medium by reacting a thiol-compound of the formula II



III

x HCl

with a reactive pyridine compound of the formula III



II

in presence of at least one base, wherein the residues R^1-R^6 have the meaning stated in claim 1.

10. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 9, characterised in that sodium and/or potassium hydroxide was used as the base.

11. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that the unhydrated compound of the formula I was initially dissolved in a water-miscible, organic solvent.

12. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that the water-miscible, organic solvent is an aliphatic alcohol, preferably methanol, ethanol, propanol or butanol, or an aprotic solvent, preferably dimethylformamide, dimethyl sulf oxide, tetrahydrofuran, or a ketone, preferably acetone, or a mixture of at least two these solvents.

13. (Withdrawn) A process according to claim 5, characterised in that the crystals are purified by washing with water and/or a solvent/water mixture, preferably an alcohol/water mixture and/or a ketone/water mixture.